

FEMA Promising Practice: Inclusive Emergency Management Practices in Vermont.

PRESENTERS:

A.J. Ruben, Supervising Attorney, Disability Rights Vermont

Tina Wood, Senior Investigator, Disability Rights Vermont

Michelle Bishop, Disability Advocacy Specialist at the
National Disability Rights Network

Who We Are

- ▶ Disability Rights Vermont, Inc. (DRVT) is part of the national Protection and Advocacy system.
- ▶ Created by Congress in response to concerns that States were not doing enough to protect people with disabilities.

The Congress created the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system to increase scrutiny and available resources in order to improve conditions for people with disabilities.



OUR STORY

- There was a push at the national level for P&A's to become more involved in emergency planning efforts.
- Between March and May of 2011, Vermont experienced heavy rains resulting in several localized flooding events and sheltering activities.
- Then in August 28, 2011 Tropical Storm Irene hit Vermont.

- Tina Wood took the lead for DRVT given her experience and expertise in emergency planning and responding to disasters.
- Over 15 years as a Red Cross volunteer in a variety of leadership and instructor roles.
- Experience in many local and statewide emergency planning activities.
- Connected through those volunteer activities to many different facets of State and Local Government and the emergency responder community.

- ◆ August 11, 2011 – 17 days before Tropical Storm Irene devastated Vermont, Governor Shumlin announced that the Red Cross was to receive a grant to increase their capacity to meet the sheltering needs of individuals with functional needs and disabilities.
- ◆ In this photo, Tina Wood of Disabilities Rights Vermont, is addressing the press.



Tina Wood of Disability Rights Vermont stands next to a functional needs shelter support trailer, 4 of which were purchased for Vermont with the state grant funds in 2011.



On August 28, 2011 the State of Vermont was devastated by Tropical Storm Irene.



Wilmington, Vermont during Tropical Storm Irene

Damage to Vermont's Infrastructure by Irene:

- ◀ At least 260 roads and 30 bridges were washed out resulting in the isolation of about a dozen towns.
- ◀ There were 4 deaths due to the storm.
- ◀ Approximately 10% of the state was without power.
- ◀ Over 1,000 Vermonter's were displaced.
- ◀ Hundreds of businesses and farms were damaged.

The Vermont State Hospital, our only state psychiatric hospital, was destroyed by the storm. As 8 feet of water inundated the building, the 51 patients were moved to the upper floors and evacuated the next day.



The aftermath of Irene in Killington, Vermont.



What Could We Do?

- ◀ DRVT submitted a grant request to the Vermont Department of Public Safety in October of 2011.
- ◀ Proposal to begin conducting accessibility surveys of Red Cross shelters and to provide disability etiquette training to Red Cross volunteers and other first responders.
- ◀ DRVT is now in it's fourth grant cycle on this project.

Why plan?



Planning for disaster and ensuring equal access for everyone is critical to the recovery efforts.

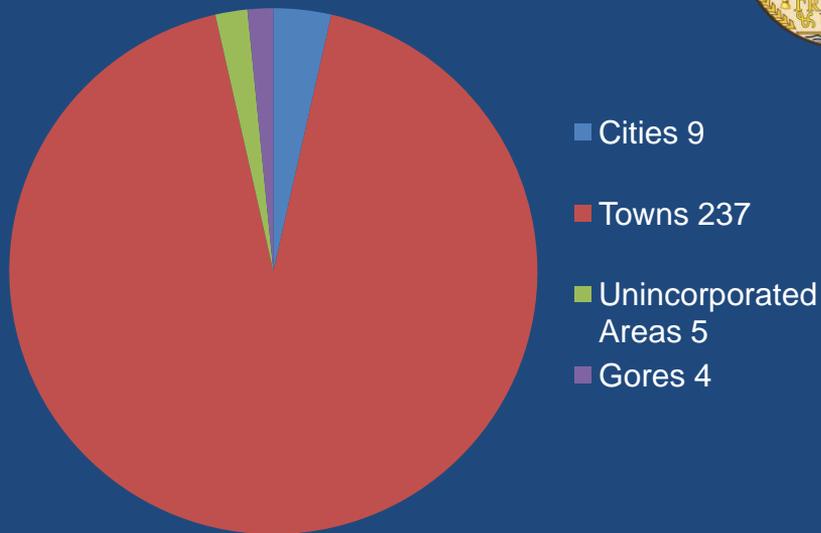


The Focus of Our Project

- ◆ The accessibility of our Vermont shelters, how prepared are we to accommodate individuals with disabilities during times of disaster?
- ◆ How knowledgeable are our volunteers and emergency responders about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how that applies to the services they may provide?

- Tina Wood has a unique perspective having managed Red Cross shelters and understanding the various roles and responsibilities that volunteers are expected to perform.
- Disability Rights background coupled with disaster response experience created a perfect blend of knowledge for teaching volunteers and conducting accessibility surveys.

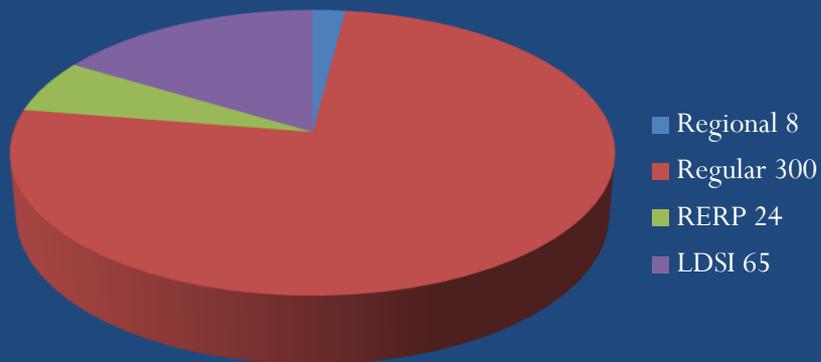
Vermont's Profile



Vermont's estimated population as of 2014:
626,562 and VT is 78% forested land.

Red Cross Shelters in Vermont

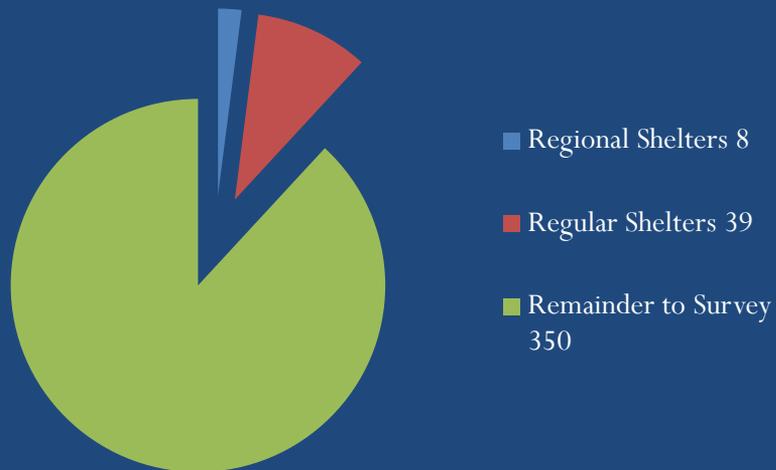
Shelters



RERP = Radiological Emergency Response Plan
LDSI = Local Disaster Shelter Initiative

Accessibility Surveys Completed

As of 2015



To prepare for these surveys we used the following documents:

1. Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters by FEMA
2. 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design by the Department of Justice
3. ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities by the ADA National Network and Institute for Human Centered Design

This document was the
foundation for our work.

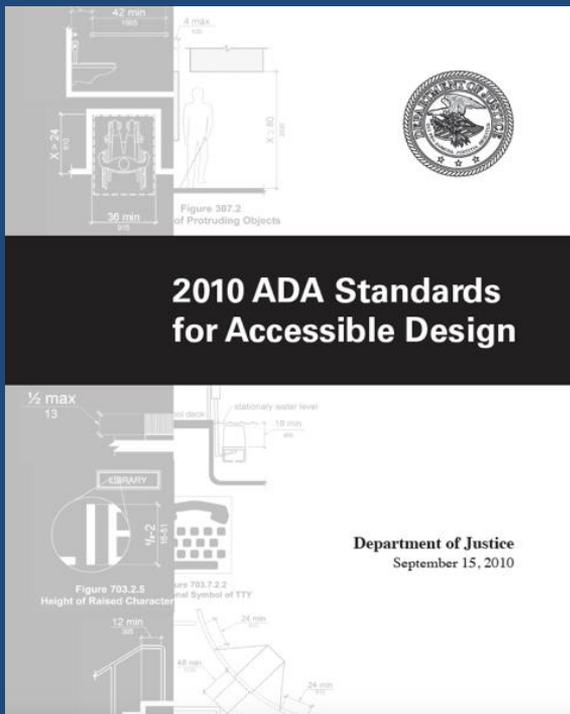
Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters

November 2010



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https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odic/fnss_guidance.pdf



This is the document to be used for citing the revised ADA Standards which have all new numbers.

http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm

ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities

Priority 1 – Approach & Entrance

Based on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design



36" min

Project _____

Building _____

Location _____

Date _____

Surveyors _____

Contact Information _____

An accessible route from site arrival points and an accessible entrance should be provided for everyone.



Institute for Human Centered Design
www.HumanCenteredDesign.org
2014



ADA National Network
Questions on the ADA 800-949-4232 voice/ty
www.ADAchecklist.org

DRVT uses this updated general checklist.

www.adachecklist.org



Emergency Shelter Accessibility Survey Report

Neshobe School



Date of Report: July 31, 2014

Prepared by:

Tina Wood, Senior Investigator

Clark Postemski, Advocate

Disability Rights Vermont

141 Main Street, Suite 7

Montpelier, Vermont 05602

802-229-1355

DRVT generates a report after each survey is completed.

Tools Needed to Conduct Survey



These are what we look at during a survey:

- × Passenger drop off areas
- × Accessible parking
- × Sidewalks and Walkways
- × Building entrance
- × Hallways and Corridors
- × Restrooms and showers
- × Eating areas
- × Sleeping areas
- × Check-in areas
- × Drinking Fountains
- × Public telephones
- × Availability of electrical power

Why are these spaces non-compliant?

1. No marked access aisle.
2. No van-accessible parking space.
3. Only one accessible parking sign for 2 spaces above the ground.





Why is this entryway non-compliant?

There is an approximate 4-inch step from the walkway into the building, thus rendering it not accessible under the ADA.



Outdated Sign



New Sign

We encourage the replacement of outdated signs.

Topics covered in DRVT's training:

- American's with Disabilities (ADA) Review
- People First Language
- Disability Etiquette – Considerations in Approach
- Communicating With and About People with Disabilities
- How This Relates to Emergency Shelters
- Service Animals



Americans With Disabilities Act

Established in 1990, the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, public and private transportation, and telecommunications.

ADA Title III: Public Accommodations

- Public accommodations must comply with basic nondiscrimination requirements that prohibit exclusion, segregation, and unequal treatment.
- They also must comply with specific requirements related to architectural standards for new and altered buildings; reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures; effective communication with people with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities; and other access requirements.
- Additionally, public accommodations must remove barriers in existing buildings where it is easy to do so without much difficulty or expense, given the public accommodation's resources.



Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), children and adults with disabilities are entitled to equal opportunity to participate in programs, services, and activities in the most integrated setting.

People-First Language

People-First Language emphasizes the person, not the disability and is preferred when communicating with or about individuals with disabilities. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the defining characteristic of an individual.

Words and Phrases to Avoid

- Retarded
- Wheelchair Bound
- Challenged or Suffers From
- Handicapped
- Downs Person
- Disabled Person
- The Blind

Words or Phrases to Use

- ◆ Person with a Disability
- ◆ Person who uses a Wheelchair
- ◆ People who are blind or a person who has low vision
- ◆ Person who has Down Syndrome
- ◆ Person who has an intellectual or developmental disability
- ◆ Person who has a physical disability

Assisting Individuals with Disabilities in Sheltering

- Accessibility of registration
- How sleeping areas are set up
- How the eating areas are set up
- That all services are on accessible, connecting routes
- Allowing service animals
- Providing materials in accessible formats
- Providing effective communication such as sign language interpreters

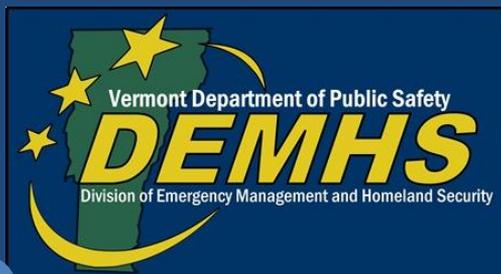
LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ Understanding the ADA – seek out source for questions.
- ▶ Training on how to do surveys.
- ▶ Knowledge of one person in all facets is unique.
- ▶ Know your State requirements, which can sometimes be different.
- ▶ Apply the current ADA Standards.
- ▶ Vermont is a small state, this model may not work well in larger states.

Effective Partnerships



**American
Red Cross**



Building Partnerships

- ▶ NDRN, FEMA, and Red Cross are MOU/MOA partners nationally.
- ▶ The P&As are a nationwide network interested in partnering locally.
- ▶ Combining expertise in emergency management and disability access.

CONTACT INFORMATION

A. J. Ruben, Supervising Attorney
aj@disabilityrightsvt.org
802-229-1355 x104

Tina Wood, Senior Investigator
tina@disabilityrightsvt.org
802-229-1355 x110

141 Main Street, Suite 7
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

www.disabilityrightsvt.org

RESOURCES:

www.ada.gov

www.ndrn.org

www.redcross.org

www.fema.gov

www.justice.gov

Questions and/or Comments?